

to study that process so that we can best defend ourselves from the threats to our national security.

I urge my colleagues to vote for the Bradley amendment.

**Mr. LARSON of Connecticut.** Mr. Chairman, I rise today in strong support of the Bradley amendment to H.R. 1815 to postpone the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) recommendations until Congress receives critical reports from the Overseas Basing Commission and the 2005 Quadrennial Defense Review.

Quite simply, this is the wrong process at the wrong time. Even as 100,000 of our men and women are in uniform are serving overseas in the Middle East and our armed services continue to miss their recruiting goals, this Administration has rushed forward with a plan that closes 33 major bases across the country. We should not be closing and consolidating bases and infrastructure here in the states now, when in another 2 years we may be bringing a significant amount of troops and equipment back from Europe and other forward deployed locations and we would have to spend more money again to reopen or recreate space for them.

Since the Pentagon released their recommendations on May 13, the BRAC commission has moved swiftly forward with its job. Yet even as BRAC begins to hold regional hearings and site visits as early as next week, the Pentagon has yet to release the detailed and facility specific information that was used to formulate their recommendations.

The BRAC process has the potential to drastically impact communities surrounding facilities slated for closure or realignment, and it is vital that this process be as open and opaque as possible. However, if the department continues to delay the release of this information, these same communities will be unable to assess or challenge the Pentagon's recommendations in the limited time they have remaining.

Anyone familiar with the 103rd Fighter Wing at Bradley, the Sub base in New London, and the assets both bring to our national defense are at a loss to explain these recommendations. The 103rd calls home an international airport with the capability and resources to host a range of aircraft, large and small—including Air Force One. Yet, the Pentagon apparently deemed Bradley unable to retain their current aircraft or take on more. In New London, one finds incredible and dynamic synergy between the base, the Sub School and an industrial base capable of manufacturing and repairing today's most advanced vessels. Yet, the birthplace of the modern submarine service was unable to garner enough military value points in the Pentagon's review to stay off the BRAC list.

Were other options explored? How did each score in critical evaluation areas? Did the Pentagon accurately assess both bases and their capabilities? Will leaving the state, like several others, without a flying unit affect recruiting and retention for the Air National Guard? These are all questions that hold the key to the future of the "Flying Yankees" and the Sub base—questions that cannot be answered until the Pentagon levels with us and countless other bases around the country facing the same delay.

I sincerely hope that there is no agenda behind this delay. But the clock is ticking and

deadlines are fast approaching. Next week, four commissioners will visit the New London Submarine base without ever seeing the facility specific data that led to its recommended closure. And, in little over a month, Connecticut will have the opportunity to present its rebuttal to the recommendations to the commission. The submariners, airmen and communities affected deserve the most thorough and extensive review possible because once these recommendations are implemented, they can never be undone.

There is no doubt that Connecticut was hit hard by BRAC, but this is not a political or parochial issue. This is an issue of ensuring the best possible defense of our Nation, and the best possible resources for our men and women in uniform. But neither this Congress, nor the BRAC Commissioners, can make a judicious and thoughtful review of these recommendations with the lack of data and shortened timeframe we now face.

In 2002 I voted in the Armed Services Committee to repeal the BRAC process outright, and again in 2003 to postpone it for 2 more years, because I have felt all along that the process had serious flaws. However, there is still time to put on the brakes before we reach the point of no return. That time is now. I urge my colleagues to support this amendment.

**Mrs. JONES of Ohio.** Mr. Chairman, I thank my colleagues on both sides of the aisle for their leadership on this issue and I rise in support of the Bradley/Simmons/Herseeth/Allen amendment to the National Defense Authorization Bill.

Mr. Chairman, why are we proposing base closures during a time of war? This BRAC round should be delayed until the recommendations of the Review of Overseas Military Facility Structure are implemented by the Secretary of Defense, a substantial number of American troops return from Iraq, the House and Senate Armed Services Committees receive the quadrennial defense review, the National Maritime Security Strategy is implemented, and the Homeland Defense and Civil Support directive is implemented. It is important that these issues be addressed before implementing the BRAC process because once a base is closed, it can never be reopened.

In the 11th Congressional District and in Northeast Ohio, over 1100 jobs will be lost through the BRAC process. These job losses will have a tremendous economic impact on the City of Cleveland, which has been named "The Most Impoverished City" in the country. Now is simply not the time for BRAC; in Cleveland or around the country.

Communities affected by the BRAC process are going to be hit with a double whammy—once when the base closes and the military leaves town, then again when the Defense Department leaves an environmental mess behind: unexploded bombs, chemical contamination, and environmental toxins.

I believe we need to address the environmental and redevelopment issues pending from previous rounds before initiating another round of BRAC closings. According to the General Accountability Office, 28 percent of the bases closed in previous BRAC rounds have still not been transferred, which means about 219 square miles of property are sitting unused.

Mr. Chairman, I realize the importance of the BRAC process, however, now is simply not the time for it. I commend my Colleagues

STEPHANIE HERSETH and JOHN THUNE for introducing legislation to address this issue. I support this amendment.

**Mr. HOLT.** Mr. Chairman, I rise today in strong support of the amendment to the Fiscal Year 2006 Defense Authorization bill offered by the gentleman from New Hampshire, Mr. BRADLEY. Like my friend from New Hampshire, I believe that the current BRAC round should be delayed and the process re-evaluated. Let me explain why.

At the BRAC hearing on May 4, BRAC Commission Chairman Anthony Principi and several other Commissioners asked Defense Department witnesses whether they had taken into account the need to house troops returning from Europe and other overseas locations as part of the BRAC evaluation. The Pentagon's witnesses assured the Commission that, yes, the department had indeed factored the returning troops into the equation, and that the proposed BRAC list would reflect those planning assumptions.

The next day—the very next day—Mr. Al Cornella, Chairman of the Overseas Basing Commission, issued a statement in which he said in part:

Our review leads us to conclude that the timing and synchronization of such a massive realignment of forces... requires that the proposed pace of events for our overseas basing posture be slowed and re-ordered. Such a step is of paramount importance in addressing quality of life issues for 70,000 returning American military personnel plus their families. Schools, health care and housing need to be in place at domestic receiving bases on the first day troops and their families arrive home.

Mr. Cornella went on to note that "The inter-agency process has not been fully used in the development of the Department's plan" and that "The Commission notes there has been almost no public discussion of this multi-billion dollar process that affects the security of every American."

In other words, DoD had failed to truly factor in the return of American forces from overseas into the BRAC equation . . . and the Overseas Basing Commission isn't the only independent body to question the Pentagon's BRAC criteria.

On May 3, the Government Accountability Office issued a report on the methodology used by the Pentagon in the BRAC process that states the Defense Department "did not fully consider the impact of force structure changes underway and the planned re-stationing of thousands of forces from overseas bases."

Mr. Chairman, we know the day is coming—and I pray that it's sooner rather than later—that those serving in Iraq and Afghanistan will be coming home. The Overseas Basing Commission and GAO are warning DoD and the Congress that we must ensure that any changes in our domestic basing structure do not leave these troops and their families with no place to call home. That's reason enough to delay the current BRAC round, but there are others.

The Defense Department will not submit its report on the Quadrennial Defense Review—the QDR, as it's known, is the Department's method of examining of America's defense needs from 1997 to 2015—until at least the first quarter of 2006, after the current BRAC round has run its course. Several BRAC Commissioners have questioned the wisdom of